

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02

ORM-01 AID-05 SAM-01 OPIC-03 /077 W

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P R 230740Z SEP 75

FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1493

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

USCINCLANT

USCINCEUR

JCS

SECDEF

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF EAID AO

SUBJECT: EVACUATION OPERATIONS NOVA LISBOA; GENERAL SECURITY
SITUATION

FOLLOWING MESSAGE IS FROM NOVA LISBOA

1. I REVIEWED PROBLEMS AND PROGRESS IN EVACUATION
WITH LL. COL. RAMOS ON SEPTEMBER 20. RAMOS WAS
TIRED, DISCOURAGED. AND BITTER. HE HAD BEEN GIVEN
RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENSURING SAFE EVACUATION OF ALL
WHO ELECTED TO RETURN TO PORTUGAL, BUT GOP WAS NOT
PROVIDING SUFFICIENT SUPPORT TO COMPLETE EVACUATION IN
TIME. HE HAD BEEN PROMISED TEN FLIGHTS A DAY BEGINNING
SEPTEMBER 14, AND INSTEAD HAD RECEIVED ONLY SIX OR SEVEN
FLIGHTS. AT THIS PACE, HE SAID, EVACUATION COULD NOT
POSSIBLY BE COMPLETED BY OCTOBER 6. THUS HE HAD
PROPOSED TO LUANDA AND LISBON THAT LUANDA BE USED/AN
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INTERMEDIATE STAGING POINT FOR SOME NOVA LISBOA

REFUGEES. UNDER HIS PROPOSAL THE NOVA LISBOA-LISBON FLIGHTS WOULD CONTINUE AT THEIR PRESENT RATE AND WOULD BE AUGMENTED BY A LARGE NUMBER OF NOVA LISBOA-LUANDA FLIGHTS. IN REPLY TO MY OBSERVATION THAT DROPPING REFUGEES IN LUANDA WOULD ONLY COMPOUND THEIR MISERY, RAMOS SAID HE HAD TO THINK FIRST OF REFUGEES' SECURITY AND SECONDLY OF THEIR COMFORT. RAMOS SAID THAT BREAKDOWN OF LAW AND ORDER HAD ALREADY STARTED IN NOVA LISBOA AND IN ABSENCE OF ANY EFFECTIVE POLICE POWER HE COULD ONLY EXPECT IT TO WORSEN AS DAYS GO BY. SEVERAL WANTON MURDERS OF MEMBERS OF PORTUGUESE COMMUNITY HAD OCCURRED DURING PAST WEEK AND SACKING AND LOOTING OF PRIVATE HOMES WAS COMMON EVENT.

2. THE PERSONAL SECURITY OF PRIVATE CITIZENS RAMOS SAID, WAS THE LESSER OF HIS CONCERNS. HE WAS MORE WORRIED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE MPLA MIGHT ATTACK NOVA LISBOA BEFORE THE EVACUATION IS COMPLETED. REMINDING ME THAT HE HAD ALREADY POINTED OUT THE MPLA ADVANCE ALONG THE BENGUELA-NOVA LISBOA HIGHWAY, RAMOS SAID HE WAS ALSO WORRIED OVER A POSSIBLE MPLA BREAKTHROUGH AT QUIBALA. IF QUIBALA FALLS, HE SAID, SANTA COMBA WILL BE THE LAST PLACE AT WHICH UNITA CAN MAKE EFFORT TO KEEP MPLA OUT OF NOVA LISBOA. UNDER THE WORST CIRCUMSTANCES, RAMOS SAID, THE MPLA COULD BE IN A POSITION TO ATTACK NOVA LISBOA IN FIFTEEN DAYS. HE WAS NOT CERTAIN THAT THE MPLA INTENDED TO ATTACK NOVA LISBOA AT ALL, AND HE THOUGHT IT POSSIBLE THAT UNITA MIGHT WITHDRAW TO SILVA PORTO RATHER THAN DEFEND NOVA LISBOA. HE WAS CERTAIN THAT IF THE MPLA WERE TO ATTACK NOVA LISBOA BEFORE COMPLETION OF THE EVACUATION HE WOULD NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT TROOP STRENGTH TO DEFEND THE REMAINING EVACUEES AND THE AIRPORT. AT THAT POINT, RAMOS SAID, THE EVACUATION WOULD HAVE TO STOP.

3. COMMENT: IT IS QUITE APPARENT THAT LT. COL. RAMOS IS PAINTING A VERY GRIM SCENARIO IN ORDER TO FORCE LUANDA AND LISBON TO RESPOND MORE QUICKLY AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GENEROUSLY TO HIS PLEAS FOR THE RESOURCES TO COMPLETE THE EVACUATION FROM NOVA LISBOA AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. I DOUBT THAT HE REALLY BELIEVES THAT NOVA LISBOA WILL BE A CITY UNDER SIEGE WITHIN FIFTEEN DAYS OR EVEN A MONTH. RAMOS IS ANXIOUS TO COMPLETE THE EVACUATION SO HE CAN IMPLEMENT THE FINAL PHASEOUT OF THE PORTUGUESE MILITARY PRESENCE IN THIS ZONE WELL BEFORE NOVEMBER 11, AND HIS COMMENTS SHOULD BE READ IN THAT LIGHT. THE

SINGLE BATTALION (HALF STRENGTH) THAT WILL REMAIN
IN NOVA LISBOA AFTER OCTOBER 4 HAS A DEBARKATION DATE
OF NOVEMBER 15, AND RAMOS INTENDS TO MEET IT. KILDAY.
KILLORAN

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